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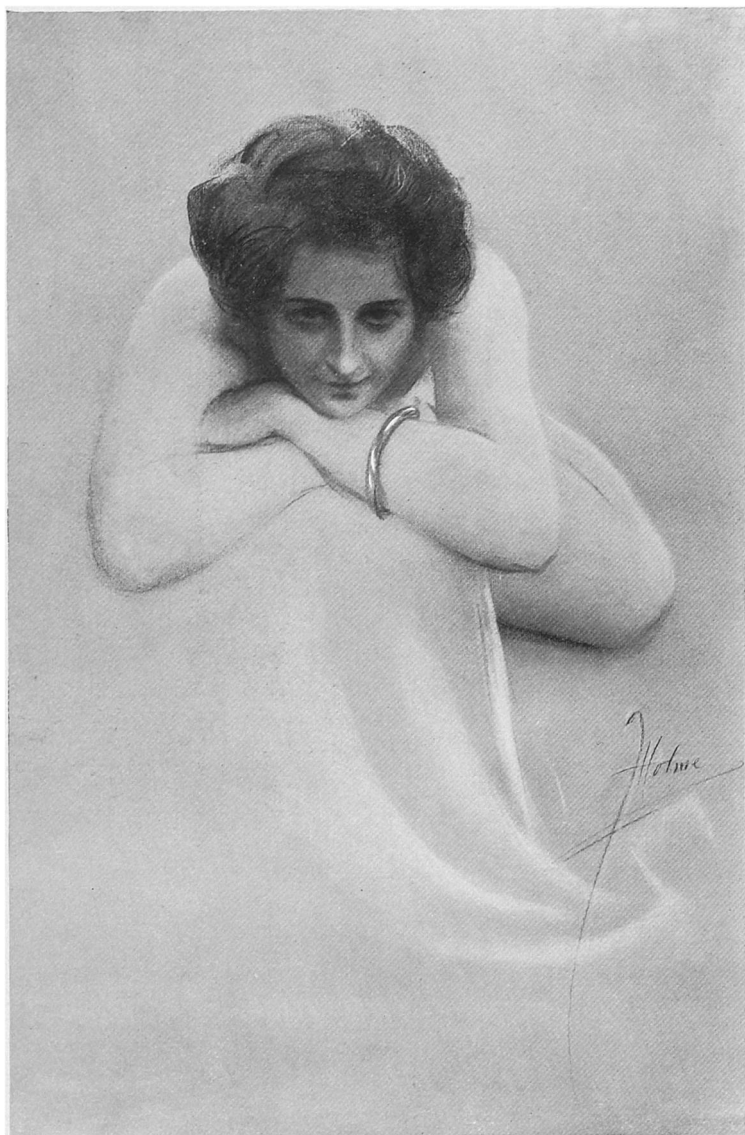
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STUDY
By F. Holme



BRUSH AND PENCIL

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DANIEL RIDGWAY KNIGHT, PAINTER

Few American painters have attained wider or more substantial popularity than Daniel Ridgway Knight. I say American painters, advisedly. Upward of thirty years of residence abroad, and of incessant work on French scenes and subjects, would lead many, perhaps to class Mr. Knight with the expatriated disloyals who have found more charm and profit in foreign than in American art circles. But the artist to-day is as enthusiastic an American as he ever was. His residence abroad was due primarily to the accident of study, and success in his career is responsible for its permanency.

The reason for Mr. Knight's popularity is not far to seek. The trite epigram that it is the presence of qualities, not the absence of faults, that gives value to a work of art, expresses a truth that the artist early recognized. The stern, the grewsome, the terrible, doubtless have a legitimate place in art, but it is the pictures of winsome qualities that people wish to buy and live with.

These are the essential characteristics of all of Mr. Knight's canvases, and the wisdom of his adopted policy is evidenced by the fact that his paintings have brought him medals and competence.

True, he is for the most part the painter of a single class of models—his demure little peasant-girl with her wooden shoes and picturesque costume appears and reappears in his pictures. His backgrounds are prone to be pleasing vistas of hill, valley, and stream, or flower-dashed meadow, all subordinated to the main figure in the foreground for which they serve as a setting. But one can readily understand that with a pretty model, and such delightful



DANIEL RIDGWAY KNIGHT.
From a Photograph



KNIGHT'S STUDIO AT POISSY

semblance of the artistic. His parents were Quakers, and his early home in Philadelphia, where he was born, was more straightlaced and serious than attractive. It was a home of "thees" and "thous," of simple manners, of inflexible rules. A ban was placed under the parental roof on pictures and music, and not a wall was brightened or an hour beguiled by either. Few men who have won distinction with the palette and brush have started under less favorable auspices.

Knight, after leaving school in Philadelphia, was entered as an apprentice in a wholesale hardware house—another Quaker establishment as rigid in its rules and as unbending in its discipline as his home. He was early given to understand that the proper function of an apprentice was to toe the mark with deference and punctuality and to devote himself to the worldly gain of his employer. He acquitted himself as a Quaker boy might be expected to, and fostered his love of

scenery as that in which the Seine valley abounds, untold charming combinations can be made; and in making these combinations the artist has been indefatigable.

It might puzzle the casuist to account for Knight's love of the dainty and beautiful except on the theory of reaction. His early surroundings were shorn of every



KNIGHT'S GLASS STUDIO AT POISSY

art in secret by copying in pen and ink engravings from books he borrowed from the Franklin Institute library.

One of these boyish efforts, which took the evenings of six weeks to complete, is still in his possession. It has appreciated greatly in value, in the artist's estimation at least, since it was originally sold to his sister for twenty-five cents and a bunch of grapes.



THE WOOD-CUTTER'S COTTAGE

By Daniel Ridgway Knight

Knight owes his start on his professional career to his grandfather, who, Quaker that he was, admitted taking pleasure in looking over these youthful drawings. One day he showed a selection of them to a friend, who insisted on submitting them to certain dealers and critics. The sheets went the rounds of Philadelphia, and were warmly praised, and the grandfather was convinced that, in view of Ridgway's talent, he himself was justified in abetting the boy in following a course his father deprecated on the ground that painting was the pursuit of light-minded and fast-living people.

The sturdy Quaker's opposition, therefore, was broken, the hardware-house apprenticeship was given up, and young Knight was

permitted to enter the classes of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.

One year was spent in that institution, working from the antique and from life, and the first strictly professional work done was to execute a large number of crayon portraits, life-size, during his holidays at Chambersburg. After another season spent at the



UN DEUIL

By Daniel Ridgway Knight
Copyright, Goupil & Co.

Academy, the artist's father caught something of his own enthusiasm, and urged him, since he had chosen to study art as his life-work, to go to Europe and take the best course of instruction obtainable. He offered to lend the money necessary for that purpose, and shortly afterward, with parental sanction and support, young Knight was settled in Paris.

He there entered Gleyre's Atelier, the largest in Paris at that time, and which readers of Trilby will remember from Du Maurier's graphic descriptions. He passed the examination, and became also a member of the École des Beaux Arts. He spent three years of close study, drawing at the Beaux Arts and painting at Gleyre's, and then passed a winter in Rome, studying at the British Academy, returning to America with well-filled portfolios.



QUIETUDE

By Daniel Ridgway Knight

Copyright 1900, Manzi, Joyant & Co



AMERICAN PAINTINGS

Plate Five

Knight then took a studio in his native city, Philadelphia, painted portraits and *genre* pictures, and also conducted a class of lady pupils. About this time he married Miss Rebecca Morris Webster, and resolved to bend every energy toward compassing another period of study in Europe. He fortified himself for this undertaking by securing a number of orders for pictures from prominent Philadelphians, and with the funds for a possibly extended residence abroad in view, he and his young wife set forth and reached Paris in 1871, when the city was still suffering from the effects of the Commune.

The brilliance and gayety of the capital, however, had little attraction for Knight, or perhaps he was too wise to yield to the charms and distractions of Parisian studio life. So, shortly after the birth of his eldest son, in 1873, he moved with his family to Poissy, a pretty, picturesque town on the banks of the Seine, where lived the great French artist Meissonier. An acquaintance was made with Meissonier, which ripened into a warm friendship, and ever afterward Knight acknowledged the French painter as his master, and did much of his work under his direct supervision.

No struggling artist ever had a kindlier and more helpful mentor. The relation of adviser and pupil began from a chance scrutiny of some of Knight's summer sketches by Meissonier, who admired them, but frankly pointed out their elements of weakness. The French master suggested that if Knight would remain in his vicinity,



SUMMER EVENING

By Daniel Ridgway Knight

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JULY MORNING
By Daniel Ridgway Knight
Copyright 1899, the Artist

and would devote himself to the painting of a large picture of local scenery, he would give him his "conseils." It was under these circumstances that the "Lavenses" was commenced, and it was under Meissonnier's guidance that it was executed. This picture was Knight's first great success. It was exhibited at the Paris Salon, and was bought by F. O. Matthiesen, of New York, in whose collection it still hangs.

Good landscapes, good models, and good advice from his neighbor, Meissonnier, soon banished all thought from Knight's mind of ever returning to

his Paris studio and associates. He openly avowed the great French painter his master, and even after success had crowned his efforts was accustomed to go to him humbly for counsel on all occasions, both in the selection of his subjects and in the execution of his work.

In a sense it was a new world for Knight, and one in which he took supreme delight. The charming scenery along the Seine has few equals from an artist's standpoint, and Knight reveled in its beauties. He chose all his models among the peasant-girls from the suburbs of Paris, who, by the way, are very different from those made familiar to the public by Millet and Bréton, being of a brighter and more refined type, which is due, doubtless, to the neighboring city.

Knight's boyhood experience now stood him in good stead. It had inculcated habits of industry; and now that he was pleasantly settled in a painter's paradise, he was an indefatigable worker. Picture followed picture, each apparently adding to the success of its

predecessor. "The Vintage at Chanteloup," "The Harvesters' Repast," "The Water Carrier," "Une Halt," "After Breakfast," "Un Deuil," "The Portionless Girl," "The Gossips," "The Inventor," "Burning Brush," "Potato Harvest," "Hailing the Ferry," "The Shepherd and his Friends," "The Idler," "First Sorrow," "Crossing the Brook," "The Declaration," "Spring," "Le Soir," were produced in rapid succession, and were all exhibited at the Paris Salon. They all represented scenes of Poissy and its neighboring villages.

Those familiar with Knight's paintings will recognize in them a sort of family resemblance, due to likeness of models and similarity of landscape backgrounds. Reference to the accompanying reproductions will give a fair idea of the character of his work. His peasant models are sufficiently alike to be sisters, his gardens are all rich with the flowers for which Poissy and its environs are famous. And it is the exceptional picture in which one does not catch a glimpse of the broad stream of the Seine winding its course through the valley.

In a word, Knight recognized the artistic value of his peasant-girl models and of the scenery in which he found himself, and after his first successes was politic enough—one might almost say courageous enough—to duplicate his canvases, with only such modifications as were necessary to differentiate the pictures without destroying the family likeness. In general, his pictures are all beautiful bits of scenery, giving opportunities for the finest effects of the landscapist's art,



LA BERGERE DE ROLLEBOISE
By Daniel Ridgway Knight

with one or more of his pet-girl models in the picturesque garb of the neighborhood in the immediate foreground, so as to give an equal opportunity for artistic portraiture.

Bright of color scheme, happy of conception, and skillful of execution, they are preëminently the type of pictures that please, and one is forced to recognize in their similarity, not a paucity of ideas or a limitation of artistic ability, but a shrewd perception of popular taste and a consistent adherence to a fixed policy.

As the number of canvases increased, however, Knight himself felt the need of variety. He had not exhausted the landscape possibilities of Poissy and its vicinity, but he decided to move farther down the river, still keeping the comfortable studios in his Poissy château, a large, rambling, picturesque Louis XIII. building, of which

he had become the owner, and which he had taken great pleasure in filling with a well-chosen collection of rare old furniture, tapestries, and bric-à-brac. Rolleboise, a tiny village between Nancy and Vernon, afforded the variety the artist desired, and thither he went with his eldest son, Aston.

Half Rolleboise is on the bank of the Seine and the other half is on the hillside. Midway between the upper and lower parts of the town Knight secured a house, with a fine garden, and built himself a studio. The Seine makes one of its great bends just in front of the house, and from the studio one commands a



THE IDLER

By Daniel Ridgway Knight

view of the far-stretching plains, dotted here and there with woods that change their garb from green to russet with the seasons. The Poissy château has since been regarded as home, and the Rolleboise house as the workshop, in which, of course, the main occupation is the production of pictures, varied only with fishing, rowing, shooting, and sailing, in which Knight delights, as a relaxation.



THE SHEPHERD AND HIS FRIENDS

By Daniel Ridgway Knight
Copyright, the Artist

Life in both establishments is simple and purposeful. Aston Knight, the eldest son, himself a landscape painter, is a constant companion of his father at Rolleboise, and the two are literally hermit artists. Mrs. Knight and the two younger boys visit them now and then for days or weeks at a time, and Aston and his father occasionally abandon their work for a month's residence at Poissy.

In this way "La Bergère de Rolleboise," "A Summer Evening," "On the Terrace," "The Gardener's Daughter," "Curiosity," "July Morning," and "Quietude" were painted in the Rolleboise retreat. They are all Salon pictures, and among the most popular of Knight's canvases. Here, too, were produced many of his less important compositions. Rarely have any of his pictures been exhibited except at the Paris Salon, owing to the fact that most of his larger canvases have been sold as soon as exhibited at the Salon, and many of his minor works have been engaged before they were finished.

One usually lives contentedly and happily where successful occupation begets honors and easy circumstances, and while it is to be regretted that Ridgway Knight has laid himself open to the charge of becoming a voluntary exile from home and home inspiration, one can scarcely wonder at the fact that he has thus prolonged his foreign residence for upward of thirty years. His Poissy château is an ideal home and his Rolleboise studio an incomparable workshop.

At the Paris Salon he was awarded an "honorable mention" and a gold medal; at Munich he won a gold medal; at the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1889 he carried off the second medal; he was honored with the Cross of the Legion of Honor in 1889 and the Cross of the

Order of St. Michael of Bavaria in 1892. In addition to these honors, he was awarded a Columbian Medal at Chicago in 1893; second medal at Antwerp; and Grand Medal of Honor at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts at Philadelphia. He glories in the fact—as many will frankly admit he has a right to—that he is



ON THE TERRACE AT ROLLEBOISE

By Daniel Ridgway Knight

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a painter of popular pictures, in which happy conceptions successfully worked out meet public approbation and command public patronage.

Knight, moreover, is not one of the painters who is unknown in his own country. Several of the leading museums in the United States are now in possession of pictures painted by him. The Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts has his "Hailing the Ferry"; the Milwaukee Museum has "The Shepherd and his Friends"; the Brooklyn Museum has his "La Bergère de Rolleboise," and the Union League has his "Summer Evening." All these pictures, and many another, have been made known to the public by engravings and other modes of reproduction. Most of the pictures herewith reproduced are new



THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER
By Daniel Ridgway Knight



AMERICAN PAINTINGS
Plate Six



AFTER BREAKFAST
By Daniel Ridgway Knight

to the American public, having been made from photographs forwarded direct from Poissy.

The popularity of Knight's pictures has made his canvases in demand by publishers for reproductive purposes. Most of the accompanying pictures, it will be noticed, are copyrighted by leading art concerns, and thousands, possibly hundreds of thousands, of fine reproductions of them have been bought by people who could not afford to indulge in the luxury of the originals.

The artist is still in the prime of life, and with his energy and indefatigable industry it is safe enough to predict that art lovers may reasonably expect many another canvas from him as happy in conception and dainty in execution as those enumerated. The broad sweeps of the Seine have not all been explored, nor have all the picturesque nooks and corners about Poissy and Rolleboise been painted. And if, perchance, the pretty peasant models made famous by Knight's canvases should age perceptibly, one would pardon the artist, and even abet his persistence, if he were to induce younger sisters, or perhaps daughters, to step into their wooden shoes and pose in their cast-off garments.

HAROLD T. LAWRENCE.